

APRIL 20, 1976

JAPAN'S DIET PROBLEMS

ANNCR: JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER TAKEO MIKI HAS CALLED UPON HIS CABINET TO MAKE A MAXIMUM EFFORT TO GET IMPORTANT BILLS PASSED BY THE PARLIAMENT BEFORE THIS SESSION OF THE DIET ENDS ON MAY TWENTY-FOURTH. BUT MISTER MIKI IS FACED WITH SEVERAL MAJOR PROBLEMS, AS WE HEAR IN THIS BACKGROUND REPORT FROM VOA'S JOHN SCHULZ IN TOKYO...

VOICE: MISTER MIKI'S CALL FOR MAXIMUM EFFORTS ON KEY ISSUES BEFORE THE DIET, WAS MADE AT THE REGULAR WEEKLY CABINET MEETING, DURING WHICH HE ALSO BRIEFED MEMBERS ON THE LATEST EFFORTS TO END THE SIX-WEEK BOYCOTT OF DIET MEETINGS BY THE THREE LEADING OPPOSITION PARTIES. THAT BOYCOTT BY THE SOCIALIST, COMMUNIST AND KOMEITO PARTIES, COMES AS A RESULT OF THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE WAY THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN HANDLING THE LOCKHEED PAYOFF SCANDAL INVESTIGATION.

NEW EFFORTS TO END THE STALEMATE IN THE DIET BEGAN MONDAY OF THIS WEEK -- WHEN MISTER MIKI MET WITH OPPOSITION LEADERS AND THE LEADERS OF BOTH HOUSES OF THE DIET IN AN EFFORT TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES. TUESDAY, MEDIATION EFFORTS BY THE TWO PARLIAMENT LEADERS RAN INTO DIFFICULTIES WHEN OPPOSITION LEADERS SAID THE COMPROMISE PROPOSAL BEING PRESENTED IS UNSATISFACTORY, CONTENDING THAT IT DID NOT MEET OPPOSITION DEMANDS FOR FULL PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF ALL PERSONS IMPLICATED IN THE LOCKHEED AFFAIR. THE U.S. HAD HANDED OVER MOST OF JAPAN'S INFORMATION ON THE CASE -- WITH THE STIPULATION THAT IT REMAINED CONFIDENTIAL EXCEPT IN CRIMINAL PROSECUTION.

ALTHOUGH THE SMALLEST OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES, THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST, AGREED TO RETURN TO THE DIET MORE THAN TEN DAYS AGO,

SESSIONS HAVE BEEN AT A VIRTUAL STANDSTILL FOR SIX WEEKS. PRIME MINISTER MIKI HAS BEEN HOPING TO GET RATIFICATION ON TWO MAJOR BILLS BEFORE THE HOUSE -- THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY AND A JOINT EXPLORATION AGREEMENT WITH SOUTH KOREA TO DEVELOP DEPOSITS ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. JAPAN SIGNED A NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY SIX YEARS AGO BUT HAS THUS FAR FAILED TO GET DIET APPROVAL. EARLIER THIS WEEK, A VISITING CANADIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION TOLD THE JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT CANADA CANNOT SUPPLY URANIUM FOR JAPAN'S NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS UNTIL THE TREATY IS SIGNED. AND HIGH-LEVEL GOVERNMENT SOURCES IN SEOUL SAY THAT SOUTH KOREA MAY START UNILATERAL OIL DRILLING IF JAPAN DOES NOT RATIFY THE TWO-YEAR-OLD JOINT DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT BEFORE THE CURRENT DIET SESSION ENDS.

FOR MISTER MIKI THAT MEANS THE FIRST STEP IS TO GET THE OPPOSITION PARTIES TO AGREE TO RESUME DIET SESSIONS. TO DO THAT, AN AGREEMENT MUST BE WORKED OUT THAT MEETS OPPOSITION DEMANDS ON HANDLING THE LOCKHEED AFFAIR AND STILL ABIDES BY STIPULATIONS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT REQUIRED WHEN IT HANDED OVER THE INFORMATION IN THE FIRST PLACE. THAT COULD BE AN UNSOLVABLE PROBLEM. AND WITH THIS A NATIONAL ELECTION YEAR IN JAPAN, IT COULD ALSO MEAN POLITICAL PROBLEMS FOR MISTER MIKI AND HIS RULING LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY.